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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

MARCH 20, 1978

THE FRUIT BASKET

CONSUMER BUYING HABITS

Satisfaction appeal--brand names, new products--appears to be more of a factor with food shoppers than price, according to a recent survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The survey divided shoppers into three basic categories to relate shopping habits to life style, so as to better understand and predict behavior and formulate policy.

Shoppers who buy their favorite brands even though they cost more made up the largest group in the sample, 39 percent. They generally like shopping for food, and experiment with new and different food products and recipes because of sensory appeal. People in this group spend more time in food preparation because they like to cook.

Those who use price as the deciding factor in food shopping made up 32 percent of the sample. Their major concern is with efficient use of time and money, and devote little time and effort to shopping because they find it a chore. These shoppers usually operate within a food budget, and buy extra food at low prices to save time and money.

The smallest group, 18 percent of the sample, carefully plan menus in advance, make out shopping lists, take advantage of advertised specials, compare prices between brands and use nutritional labeling.

The other 11 percent did not fit into any of the three groups.

- * Fruit prices are expected to be higher during the first half of 1978---- with smaller supplies of both fresh and processed fruit, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture marketing specialists.
- * Citrus crop is expected to be 7 percent lower than last year, as reported on March 9.
- * Fresh apple and pear stocks are down from last year and canned fruits and orange juice are below last year's levels.
- * February prices for all fruits, fresh and processed, were higher than last year except for grapefruit and lemons.
- * Grapefruit production records earlier indicated a record crop for all areas except Texas--however, as of March 9, production was 1 percent below 1976-77 records.
- * Current stocks of most dried fruits, particularly raisins, are larger than last year.
- * Frozen fruit and berry supplies are moderately higher than last year.
- * Prices for most canned noncitrus fruits have increased since last fall and are expected to remain above year-earlier levels.

FOOD CLIPS

"Whipped butter" is regular butter whipped for easier spreading. That increases the amount of air in the butter, according to marketing specialists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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If you use whipped butter in place of regular butter in recipes, use 1/3 to 1/2 more than the recipe calls for if the measurement is by volume (1 cup, 1/2 cup, etc.) If the measurement is by weight (1 pound, 1/4 pound, etc.) use the amount called for.

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Butter is made by churning pasteurized cream, and must have at least 80 percent milkfat. Salt and coloring may be added. Some people prefer unsalted butter which may be labeled "sweet" or "unsalted."

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Did you know that there are hundreds of varieties of natural cheeses? Cheese is usually made from whole milk, although skim milk, cream, and goat's milk may also be used.

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Wax or some other protective coating usually is put around cheese after it has been formed. It is then allowed to age for varying lengths of time, depending on the kind of cheese being made.

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ABOUT

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Janice Okun, food editor of the Buffalo (N.Y.) Evening News, says the Northeast Region of the National Newspaper Food Editors will meet at Cornell University, Ithaca, May 10-12.....Suzanne Slesin, new design editor at Esquire magazine, is doing food and new trend articles, including life-style storiesA new monthly cooking program, "The Everyday Gourmet," has started on KMOX-TV (St. Louis, Mo.), with Dottye Bennett at the helm....Robyn Frank of the Food and Nutrition Information Center of the National Agricultural Library (Beltsville, Md.) spoke in London recently about human nutrition information, including audiovisual materials, available at NAL for laymen.....Upcoming events of interest: Second International Congress on Obesity, Oct. 23-26, Sheraton Park Hotel, Washington, D.C....Behavior Effects of Energy and Protein Deficits (International Conference), Pan American Organization Bldg. in Washington, D.C. Nov. 30-Dec. 2.

SPECIAL: NOTE TO FOOD EDITORS

"COST OF FOOD AT HOME" Charts Revised

"Cost of Food At Home" (update), regularly featured in Food and Home Notes, will not be published for the next two months because of changes in the new Consumer Price Indexes published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The new price indexes will be less sensitive to food price changes, so the method of computing costs for "Cost of Food At Home" will also have to be revised. The feature will begin again in May.